

REMARKS

To more particularly point out their invention, Applicants have amended claims 11 and 12 to each include a limitation recited in claim 1. Of note, this limitation had been previously considered by the Examiner. Applicants have also amended claim 5 to include the limitation recited in its dependent claim 14 and amended claim 6 to include the limitation recited in its dependent claim 15. These amendments result in claims 5 and 6 being identical in scope to already-examined claims 14 and 15, respectively.

The amendments should be entered as they raise no new issues that will require further consideration or search and also do not touch the merits of the application within the meaning of 37 C.F.R. 1.116(b).

Applicants have further cancelled claims 14 and 15. Claim 13 was previously cancelled.

Claims 1-12 and 16-20 are now pending and under examination. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider this application, as amended, in view of the following remarks.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 17-20 are rejected as obvious over Masayoshi et al., European Patent Application No. 1275679 ("Masayoshi"), in view of Hazen et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,011,997 ("Hazen"), Andrews et al., Aust. J. Chem., 1971, 413-422 ("Andrews"), and Pfirrmann et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,897,498 ("Pfirrmann") as evidenced by Zengel et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,410,082 ("Zengel"). See the Office Action, page 2, lines 10-17.

Claims 5 and 6 have been amended. Their scopes are identical to those of claims 14 and 15. The Examiner admits that claims 14 and 15, now cancelled, are allowable (see the final Office Action, page 7, line 6); it is clearly his position that these claims are not rendered obvious by Masayoshi, Hazens, Andrews, Pfirrmann, and Zengel. Thus, amended claims 5 and 6, respectively identical in scope to cancelled claims 14 and 15, are also nonobvious and allowable.

Applicants now turn to claims 11 and 12. They cover methods of preparing polyamic acid or polyamide. Each of claims 11 and 12, as amended, requires “upon completion of the reaction, adding an alkali to adjust the pH of the solution to be in the range of 9 to 14.”

As correctly pointed out by the Examiner, “Masayoshi, Hazen, Andrews, Pfirmann, and Zengel do not disclose the [pH-adjustment] limitation []: ‘upon completion of the reaction, adding an alkali to adjust the pH of the solution to be in the range of 9 to 14’” and “[t]herefore, all independent and dependent claims reciting this limitation are allowed.” See the final Office Action, page 7, lines 7-9 and page 8, lines 7-8. In short, amended claims 11 and 12, now reciting this pH-adjustment limitation, are also not rendered obvious by the cited references and are allowable.

Claims 17, 18, 19, and 20 depend from claims 5, 6, 11, and 12, respectively. For the reasons set forth above, they also would not have been obvious to a skilled artisan in view of Masayoshi, Hazen, Andrews, Pfirmann, and Zengel.

Allowable subject matter

The Examiner admits that claims 1-4, 7-10, and 14-16 are allowable. See the final Office Action, page 7, line 6.

Note that claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled. As pointed out above, amended claims 5 and 6 are identical in scopes to allowable claims 14 and 15, respectively.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment.

In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed.

Applicants : Shinji Nishimae, et al.
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Client Ref. No.: F 04-038-PCT/US/NS

Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Please apply any other charges to Deposit Account No. 50-4189, referencing Attorney Docket No. 60004-109US1.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 2-4-10

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